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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4298  
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RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 6279  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 2848  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 6886  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 7097  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 6336  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 4987  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 7193  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3957  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2174  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 0840  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 8361  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 3366  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 7344  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9421  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 2167  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 3214  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002520

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XOX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: OPRC KMDR IS

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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Mideast

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Key stories in the media:  
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Israel Hayom quoted Fox News as saying that Israel is examining a list of 70 terrorists formulated by Hamas after Israel rejected an earlier list. Israel Hayom cited the Palestinian newspaper Al-Manar as saying that PM Benjamin Netanyahu has accepted the second stage of the deal Q Shalit's transfer to Egypt. Yesterday, Industry,

Trade, and Labor Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer (Labor Party) was quoted as saying in an interview with Maariv that he "hopes the matter is approaching an end. There is an agreement on a certain formula. In three months, I hope, we will see Gilad back home." The Jerusalem Post quoted IDF Spokesman Avi Benayahu as saying that positive reports about the deal should not be trusted.

The Jerusalem Post reported that following Iran's rejection of the latest international effort to prevent it from building nuclear weapons, Israel is urging the international community to impose sanctions aimed at denying Tehran any nuclear fuel cycle capabilities.

The Jerusalem Post reported that PM Netanyahu is interested in aiming for a final-status agreement and not an interim one as some of his ministers are proposing, if and when negotiations with the Palestinian Authority resume. The Jerusalem Post quoted Netanyahu as saying in various internal discussions this week that were there "courageous leadership" on the Palestinian side, a resumption of negotiations could lead to a final peace agreement, and that this was preferable in his mind to an interim agreement based on a Palestinian state within temporary borders. PA President Mahmoud Abbas's diplomatic advisor Nimir Hamad was quoted as saying in an interview with Maariv that the PA is not impressed by Israel's latest diplomatic push designed to bypass the intention to bring the issue of Palestinian statehood before the U.N. Security Council.

Israel Radio quoted Bouthaina Shaaban, a close associate of Syrian President Bashar Assad, as saying that French President Nicolas Sarkozy told Assad last week that Netanyahu is prepared to start negotiations with Syria without preconditions.

Israel Radio reported that cabinet minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer is leading an important commercial delegation to Turkey. He will meet with the Turkish DM.

Maariv cited a warning from the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy that young Israelis on tourist visas who try to earn money in malls throughout the U.S. during Christmas-time might be subject to deportation and banned from entering the country for years. Maariv quoted an Israeli woman who was deported as saying that she is now a registered offender in the U.S. On the other hand, the newspaper mentioned the possibility of working in the U.S. legally through an H2B visa for season work.

The media reported that for the third time in a month, soldiers of the Kfir Brigade tried to wave banners against the evacuation of settlements.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe cited the opposition of Nablus's Palestinian governor to visits by Israelis to Joseph's Tomb.

HaQaretz reported that Yosef Havilio, the Jerusalem Municipality's legal adviser, has informed Mayor Nir Barkat and District Police Commissioner Aharon Franco that they must immediately implement the Supreme Court order to evacuate and close down Beit Yehonatan in East Jerusalem's Silwan neighborhood. Havilio's position contradicts statements made by the Mayor and published in HaQaretz on Wednesday, claiming that the carrying out of the evacuation will be delayed because "legal alternatives are being evaluated by the owners and the structure and the courts." The Jerusalem Post reported that the Jerusalem Municipality announced it would build 5,000 new homes for East Jerusalem but that it failed to say when.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Giampaolo Di Paola, the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, visited Israel this week to study IDF tactics and methods that the military alliance can utilize for its war in Afghanistan.

Yediot reported that an international extensive network of jurists, including the Goldstone Report, is seeking indictments of senior Israelis in Britain, Ireland, Spain, Norway, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. The lawyers claim that they will be successful sooner or later. HaQaretz (English Ed.) quoted South Africans who served

in the IDF as saying this week they would continue visiting their home country despite attempts to prosecute them there for serving in

a foreign army -- which South African law prohibits. Many see the effort, spurred by war crimes allegations emanating from Operation Cast Lead and initiated in the main by pro-Palestinian NGOs, as mere "saber-rattling." At the same time, soldiers and activists said those concerned should be careful not to publicize evidence of serving in Gaza and to stay informed about new developments. Yediot reported on a diplomatic incident between Israel and South Africa in which a security officer for El Al, who carries a diplomatic passport and was employed by the Israeli Embassy, was expelled from the country following claims of racism after an investigative report in the local media.

The media quoted former Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin as saying in an interview with ABC News this week that she disagrees with the Obama administration's demand that Israel halt settlement construction

Maariv reported that this week children from the Jerusalem kindergarten Gan Hashalom (QPeace GardenQ or QKindergarten of Peace") representing the three monotheistic religions sent a message of peace through NASAQs Atlantis shuttle.

Leading media reported that yesterday a 19-year-old religious Jew stabbed and wounded an Arab man in JerusalemQs French Hill neighborhood.

The media reported that the selection committee to name the next attorney general has not succeeded in reaching a decision. Maariv and other media say that the decision now lies in NetanyahuQs hands.

Major media cited Jerusalem District Attorney Eli AbarbanelQs announcement yesterday that the state is closing the case against attorney Uri Messer, who was investigated by police in connection with two affairs for which his close friend, former PM Ehud Olmert, is currently on trial. The first case involved allegations that as industry and trade minister and communications minister, Olmert personally intervened in applications to the Investment Center from industrialists represented by Messer, and interfered with the work of the center's professional civil servants on behalf of Messer and his clients. In the second case, Messer was investigated regarding allegations that he held hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, given to Olmert by New York businessman Morris Talansky, in his office safe and later in a Bank Leumi strongbox. Messer testified to police against his close friend during the Talansky affair investigation. Since then, he and Olmert have not spoken to each other. In his announcement, Abarbanel made it clear that the decision to close the file against Messer would have no bearing on the indictment of Olmert.

HaQaretz led with the High Court of JusticeQs rejection of the law to privatize prisons as Qunconstitutional.Q The Court, presided by its President Dorit Beinisch, ruled that for the state to transfer authority for managing the prison to a private contractor, whose aim would be monetary profit, would severely violate the prisoners' basic human rights to dignity and freedom. In 2004, after the U.S., Britain, and France had all approved private prisons, the Knesset had passed Amendment 28 to the Prisons Ordinance, which permitted the establishment of such prisons in Israel.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that Palestinians in Gaza wore black after the defeat of the Egyptian national team to Algeria in the World Cup qualifying match in Sudan.

Yediot presented the result of a poll conducted among Kadima voters:  
QWho would you like to head Kadima?Q Tzipi Livni: 80%; Shaul Mofaz: 10%.

Block Quotes:  
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II. QBibi May Claim Relations with the U.S. Are Fine but...

Senior columnist and longtime peace advocate Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (11/20): QThe decision to announce the construction of 900 apartments in Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood was akin to falling on one's head, politically. Quite rightly, the White House issued a statement rapping Israel for this slap in the face to American efforts to arrange a successful dialogue between the sides. Bibi can claim 10 times over that Qthere's no crisis with the United States,Q but what will he say to the White House's expression of dismay at the Israeli Government's move? Bibi may be a comeback artist, but at his age, people don't change, and there's nothing that can be done about it.

II. QThe Race for a Plan

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (11/20): QGreat tidings are afoot. Not only does Mofaz have a plan of stages of his own, Peres is also taking his and BarakQs plan out of mothballs, and mainly, so is Netanyahu. He plans to come out with a seminal speech of his own, one that will make history. The race for a plan is not due to a burst of creativity. It is due to constraint. Mofaz -- to his credit -- was the first to notice the vacuum: the Americans are not presenting a plan. The Israeli Government is not presenting a plan. Livni is not presenting a plan. The person who comes up with a plan will make headlines. And so he did. Peres and Barak presented their plan to anyone willing to listen, including President Obama, the heads of European states, and the entire Palestinian leadership.

The answer was no. The Palestinians refuse to agree to the establishment of a state in temporary borders, because, they say, with Israel, the temporary is permanent. The Palestinian refusal led to an American refusal. That was also the case for MofazQs plan, which was quite different from the Barak/Peres plan. The plan is an alibi. When asked one day, Mr. President, Mr. Minister, what did you do for the sake of the peace you talked about so much, how did your support for the Netanyahu government help, they will reply: what do you mean? We had a plan!

III. QWhoQs Temporary, Exactly?

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (11/20): QBibiQs temporary [Palestinian] state will be established on the PalestiniansQ current territory (around 40% [of the land]), as opposed to MofazQs Palestinian state that is supposed to receive 20 extra percent in order to allow for territorial contiguity. What is really happening is that Netanyahu is trying to push forward the diplomatic process with one hand and to delay it with the other hand.

IV. QSalam Fayyad Builds Palestine

Editor-in-Chief David Horovitz wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (11/20): Q[Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam] Fayyad is anxious that his own people not come to regard the PA forces as subcontractors helping to secure Israel, but rather as the protectors of a nascent Palestine. The Americans are completely won over. QWeQve waited decades to hear and see a Palestinian leader like this,Q a prominent American visitor observed to me this week. In Ramallah, day by careful day, Salam Fayyad is building a Palestinian state. If Fayyad survives for another couple of years and presides over an increasingly stable West Bank, talk of unilateral declarations of Palestinian statehood will no longer be shrugged off by key international players, including the U.S. If Israel doesnQt find the means to partner Abbas and Fayyad to statehood, signs are the rest of the world might do so anyway.

IV. QLeadership Needed

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (11/20): QThe insolent defiance of the hesder yeshiva soldiers [who combine military service with religious studies] who announced that they would not evacuate outposts the government has decided to dismantle, and the audacity of those on the right who blame this behavior on

the Government for using the IDF in carrying out the decision to evacuate settlements from Gaza, reflect the breakdown of state authority in Israeli society and the disturbing phenomenon of a government that opts not to govern.... The law enforcement authorities have registered impressive successes in recent years, in the existing structure, and what is necessary for stepping up the fight against crime is the determination that exists today, and means. It is not the weakening of law enforcement that is necessary to bolster the rule of law, but the government's determination to exercise its authority and govern, and not allow interested parties to essentially strip it of power. For this we need a leadership that must also be seen.

CUNNINGHAM